

Why can't we just drain Lake Davis dry?

People often ask why Lake Davis can't just be drained dry in order to get rid of the pike without the use of chemicals. This sounds like a very simple straightforward method of dealing with the pike. After all, fish need water to live and if you get rid of the water, you get rid of the fish.

Unfortunately Lake Davis is not a perfect "bathtub" shape and consequently all the water will not go down the drain. The lake has what is referred to as a "dead pool", meaning a small amount of water which will remain in the lake due to the outlet valve being placed slightly higher than the absolute bottom on the lake. One could empty this pool by pumping the water out. The lake does not have a perfectly smooth contoured bottom and most likely has depressions where standing water would remain, supporting some fish life.

A second factor is that there are three perennial streams (streams which flow year round), Cow, Freeman, and Big Grizzly Creek which would continue to flow and support fish life. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to divert all the flow from these creeks. These creeks are formed by many springs and seeps along their length and do not have clearly defined headwaters that could be diverted.

Third, it would be necessary to develop a completely effective screening device to prevent flushing pike from the lake during the draining process. Whenever one attempts to pass water through an outlet, hose, or other similar device, one encounters numerous problems with developing a screening device that does not clog and thus stop the draining or siphoning effect. The screening device would have to be capable of preventing juvenile-sized pike from being flushed from the lake. Although the concept sounds easy and doable, the practical application becomes very complex. If only a few pike were flushed from the lake, the whole purpose of eliminating pike from California's waters would be defeated. Pike would be capable of moving downstream into the Middle Fork of the Feather River, down to Lake Oroville, and possibly through Lake Oroville into the Feather River and then the Sacramento River and the California Delta System.

In all likelihood, complete draining of the lake would require some sort of chemical application to insure that all pike are eliminated.



Catch a pike? Kill it and call 1-888-CALTip and leave a message, or call our office at (530) 832-9682. You can also turn the fish in to Grizzly Store at Lake Davis or Dollard's Sierra Market in Portola.

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(530) 832-4067 - www.dfg.ca.gov/northernpike